

SICC MEETING MINUTES

Truman Building, Room 400

November 9, 2006

Members Present

Elizabeth Spaugh
Carissa Mattern
Wendy Witcig
Valeri Lane

Leslie Elpers
Pamela Speer
Stacey Owsley
Kathy Fuger

Senator Scott Rupp
Ron Berg
Joyce Jackman
Kathryn Sapp

Members Not Present

Michael Dittmore
Paula Nickelson

Doug Ommen
Kim Oligschlaeger

Lisa Robbins

DESE Staff Present

Dale Carlson

Bill Connelly

Judy Goans

To review copies of the handouts referenced in the minutes below, go to the following website: <http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/FirstSteps/SICCpage.html>.

Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions – Elizabeth Spaugh called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. Introductions were made. Valeri Lane has accepted a new position and will no longer be with the Children’s Therapy Center. She will continue to serve on the SICC board until June of 2007. Elizabeth expressed her gratitude to Valeri on the great job that she has done for early childhood education in Missouri and that she will be missed as a member of the council.

Approval of SICC Minutes - Ron Berg moved that the minutes of the September 15, 2006 meeting be approved as corrected. Valeri Lane seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Budget Report – (see handouts) - The “A” report shows program monthly expenditures and revenue. FY 07 is the second year in a row in which First Steps appears to be on very solid ground from a funding standpoint. To date, First Steps has accessed about 40% of available revenue and we are about a third of the way through this fiscal year.

Calendar year 2007 insurance payment declaration letters were sent to carriers in October. Carriers electing the single bulk payments based on their payment declaration/election option will be billed on January 1, 2007 with payment due to First Steps by January 31. To date, only one test direct billing for private insurance has been completed. A comprehensive billing for calendar year 2006 will occur in November.

Part of the issue with direct billing for individual First Steps services lies in the fact that there is no consistency within the state concerning insurance carrier operation. Carriers may have similar names and they all bill and process claims differently. While the Department of Insurance assigns a carrier a specific identification number, the carriers do not actually incorporate this number into any of their literature/insurance cards or data reporting. This makes identification of individual carriers very difficult in the field.

Doug Ommen from the Missouri Department of Insurance is a member of the SICC, but was not present at this meeting. Joyce will continue to work with the Missouri Department of Insurance on billing issues and SICC representation.

The council suggested that someone from the Department of Insurance be invited to present at the March meeting regarding insurance issues for the program.

Dale stated that October was the first Family Cost Participation (FCP) billing. At this point in time, only 25% of the families in the program had paid their October FCP payment which means 75% of the families in the program are in arrears. DESE will continue to work with the CFO and the SPOEs to ensure that families better understand the monthly FCP invoice and the ramifications of not bringing the FCP account current.

Dale provided the following Family Cost Participation (FCP) statistics based on data as of 9/19/2006:

- Number of active First Steps Families: 3,634
 - Number of active families with 1 or more children in IFSP: 2,951
 - Number of First Steps families with an active FCP account (entered in the FCP system): 2,659
 - Number of families with a calculated FCP monthly fee greater than \$5.00: 1,025
 - Number of families with a calculated monthly fee of \$0.00: 1,628
 - Number of families with Medicaid exclusion (\$0.00 monthly fee): 1,303
 - Based on these numbers, the 1,025 families with a monthly fee of \$5 or greater would generate slightly over \$515,000 annually. The potential current year (October-June) receipts are \$386,000.
 - 1,628 families (61%) with an active FCP account have a monthly fee of \$0.00.
 - 517 families (19%) with an active FCP account have a monthly fee in the \$5-\$30 range.
 - 267 families (10%) with an active FCP account have a monthly fee in the \$31-\$70 range.
 - 241 families (9%) with an active FCP account have a monthly fee in the \$70-\$100 range.
- Of this number, 157 declined to give financial information which automatically places the family at the \$100 per month level.

The B report shows monthly expenditures for direct service by SPOE. Currently spending is at the rate of \$1.38 million in direct service cost per month. FY06 spending ended at \$1.41 million per month. It appears that the average cost per child is becoming more similar across SPOEs.

Direct service costs reflected on this report include only those children that have some cost to the program during the month.

IFSPs and 45 Day Numbers for FY2005-06 Referrals and SPOE Data Report – (see handouts) – Bill Connelly indicated that in preparation for the 2005-06 Annual Performance Report (APR), due to the U.S. Department of Education on February 1, 2007, the Data Section ran some preliminary numbers in regard to 45-day referral information (July 2005-June 2006). The data shows significant improvement over last year's numbers with 91.3% of referrals handled in a timely fashion.

The SPOE data report, which is the main data report featured on the DESE website, containing data on referrals, IFSPs and inactivation's, went online in October. Bill pointed out that referrals dropped by 500 children in calendar year 2005, and because of that, child count has dropped as well. Referrals have stabilized in 2006, but the drop from 2005 will continue to affect the child count for another year or two. The eligibility rate has stayed relatively similar for the past 3 years. All of this information can be obtained through the DESE website at:
<http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/FirstSteps/SPOEdataandreports.html>

The council requested a report from the CFO listing providers by discipline, county and their reason for leaving the program if no longer providing services in First Steps. DESE will attempt to obtain this information from the CFO for the next meeting.

Regarding data reliability and accuracy, Bill walked through data verification activities completed with SPOE Region 7 (see handout). Some issues were identified and remedied, primarily related to the number of active IFSPs. It was suggested that the data needs to be verified for each SPOE in order to ensure the credibility of the data. Bill explained that many issues are related to the old SPOE software and database and not the new WebSPOE system. DESE will continue verification with each SPOE.

Compliance Update - (see handout) - Margaret Strecker, Director of Compliance, prepared an overview document of the monitoring plans for the coming year. Margaret will attend the January meeting to discuss the plan and answer any questions. Specific questions can be e-mailed directly to Margaret. The handout will be posted on DESE's website.

Program Update – Joyce Jackman - DESE has contracted with Leader Services to develop a data collection system to track information and monitor activities for both the Part B and Part C programs. The Part C system is still in development.

The council discussed issues associated with provider monitoring. It was suggested that the SICC find out what is being done in other states for provider monitoring. A question was asked regarding the opportunity for SPOEs to contract for providers. Phase II SPOEs can subcontract or employ providers under their current contract. Joyce said that is one model that is currently being considered and obtaining adequate provider coverage for the state is a primary issue for the program.

Several forms of provider oversight exist currently in the system. If a provider is not performing as the program expects, the SPOE has the ability to talk to the provider about their concerns. They do not have the authority to remove the provider from the program.

Most provider reviews conducted by DESE are for inaccurate billing and generally turn out to be an error with the actual date of service. DESE has steps in place that allow for the recovery of money paid to the provider.

SPOE Operations - SPOE directors indicated they would like more frequent contact with DESE. Currently, they meet six times a year (the day before the SICC meeting). DESE has also agreed to host a teleconference every other month. SPOEs can listen in to the teleconference but conversation is limited due to the difficulty in following conversation via a teleconference. SPOEs instead can send their questions/concerns via email to Joyce who will then respond via email with explanations to the questions received.

An independent facilitator will be provided at an upcoming SPOE meeting for the purpose of allowing the SPOE directors to address their differences and improve their working relationships. DESE agreed to look into arranging for a facilitated meeting.

OSEP Report - (see handout) - Joyce provided a document from OSEP regarding their process for rating states on the results of their Annual Performance Report (APR). These designations will be the same ones required for DESE to use related to individual SPOE/contractor operations after monitoring activities are completed. In January the SICC will receive the draft APR scheduled for 2/1/07 submission to OSEP. Mary Corey will walk the council through the draft report. One of the new APR indicators addresses whether or not parents understand their rights under IDEA and are able to advocate for their child. On December 12, DESE will discuss possible improvement activities for this area with a group of stakeholders. DESE would like a representative from the SICC at the meeting on December 12, especially the parent members. The time would tentatively be 10:00-3:00 on December 12. Kathryn, Elizabeth and Wendy have all agreed to attend. A parent representative, Millicent Gillespie, will be contacted to see if she can also attend.

Bobby Showers from the State Auditor's office indicated to DESE that the department will receive a draft report soon and the final report should be available at the end of the year.

RICC Reports

- Region 5 reported that their RICC is doing well and they are hoping to build on their membership.
- Region 9 reported that the collaboration between Department of Mental Health and the office is progressing nicely and they are becoming more centralized.
- Southwest Region 7 said they have 2 committees going strong with Provider Recruitment and Child Find. SICC needs to be aware that the RICC is struggling with obtaining providers in their area.
- Region 3 NE said they have had 3 RICC meetings and they have taken provider recruitment in a different direction by supporting the First Steps providers that are

there and trying to work together by going to them with information. The Child Find Committee is working on networking with PAT and Headstart to build collaboration with them.

- Region 4 is working on Child Find and trying to work with businesses in the area to strengthen Child Find. They are starting a transition committee with a panel of parent providers and school districts.
- Region 2 reported an upcoming legislative breakfast committee and a Breakfast for Babies with Region 1. They are working on collaboration across communities and working together to get the information to the parents and families and hope to finalize this in January.

Member Issues - Ron Berg indicated he was asked about DMH's continuation with service coordination due to a rumor circulating. He indicated that they are offering to expand choices and options for service coordination across the state.

Old Business - DESE reviewed 2 fliers addressing general information on First Steps and developmental milestones for children birth to three. DESE agreed to print the general information brochure for use statewide and will use the First Steps logo on the brochure. Use of the logo will be limited to statewide materials approved by DESE. Any time an RICC prepares a handout that they feel is usable statewide they can submit a draft to DESE for review and if approved, DESE will print the document with the logo and distribute statewide.

A step-by-step guide for parents claiming reimbursement for transportation is on the website. All SPOEs need to be sure that their service providers know where to find the transportation information.

A draft document on technical assistance (TA) information was shared with the SPOE directors. DESE does not have dedicated staff for the First Steps program making it difficult to develop elaborate documents addressing topical issues. DESE is trying to break issues into simple question and answer format in order to respond more quickly.

At the previous SICC meeting it was recommended that a panel of Part C coordinators from other states come to Missouri to discuss their models with the SICC. A handout was provided that summarized service delivery models from various states. The handout was prepared by the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC). With this new information from NECTAC the question was asked if the SICC still needed bring state representatives in to discuss their programs. Joyce suggested waiting for the audit report to see what recommendations it may contain. However, she would be open to a stakeholder group regarding provider issues.

Valerie Lane made a motion that a stakeholder group be formed to look at provider issues and report back to the SICC. The motion was amended to include first a smaller group to define the scope of work for the larger stakeholder group for provider configuration and other issues. Leslie Elpers seconded the motion with amendment. Motion passed. It was suggested that the smaller group be formed before members for the larger group are selected.

Dr. Robin McWilliam from Vanderbilt will be in the state at the end of February and again in March to conduct regional workshops for the program.

Additional information about IDENTIX was distributed. The state uses IDENTIX as opposed to the Highway Patrol (for background checks) because the Highway Patrol takes approximately 10 weeks to process applications and IDENTIX is much faster. The information provided on the handout explains how providers can obtain a background check through the Highway Patrol if IDENTIX is not convenient to them.

DESE is continuing to have conversations with the Governor's office regarding their support of changes to First Steps that might require additional funding. Increasing provider rates and a more extensive travel reimbursement for providers are the 2 items that continue to be discussed.

New Business - Joyce suggested that the RICCs provide a written one page summary to distribute and post of their report to the SICC. It was suggested that a template be developed and sent out for the RICCs to use. Child Find, Provider Recruitment and First Steps monitoring would be the three main headings. It was suggested that the SPOEs could also have their own template and standardized form to report their issues. These issues could include bulleted points for issues and barriers and how they are working through it, provider issues, staffing issues, caseload and no provider issues.

Val Lane made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Leslie Elpers seconded. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.